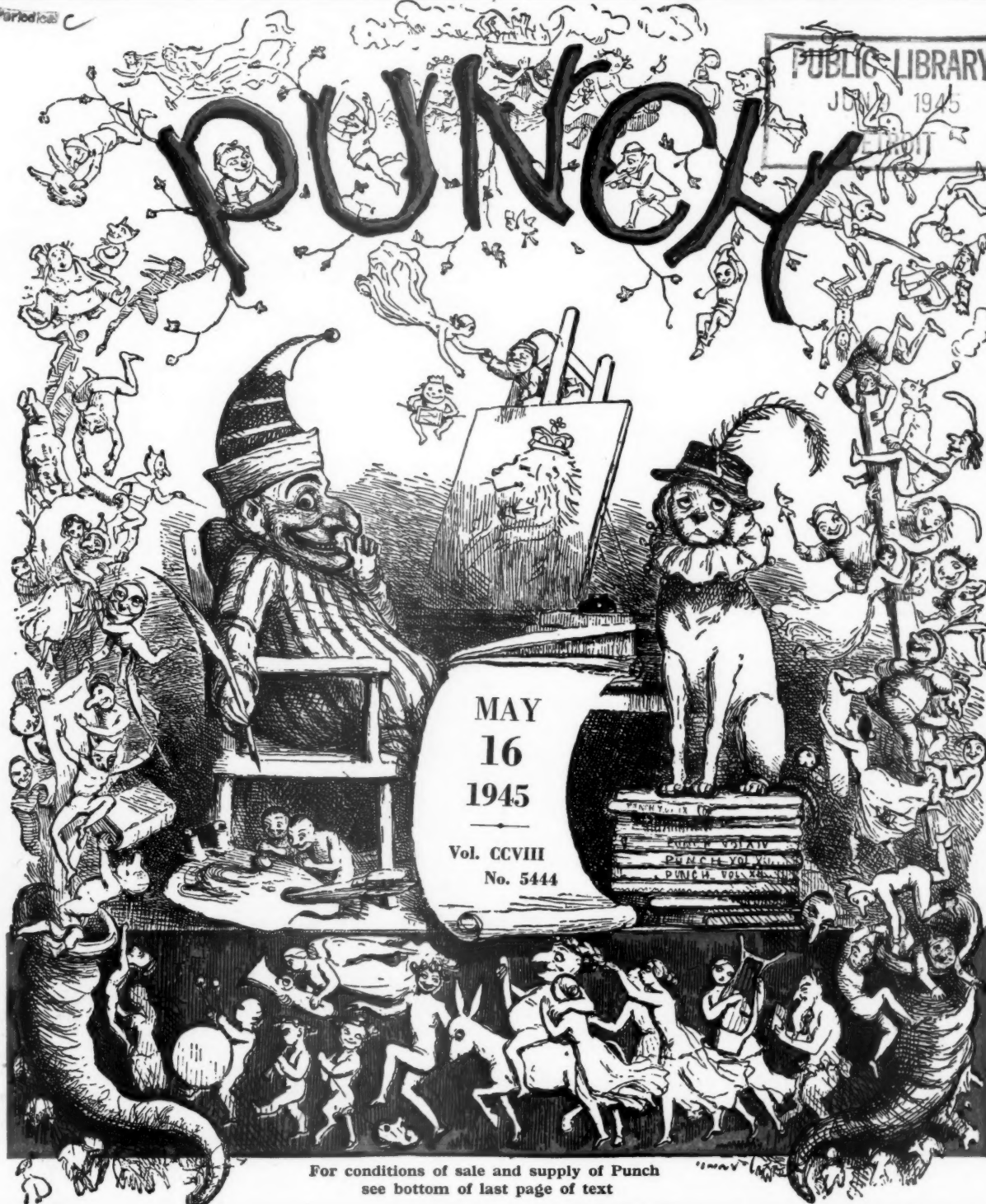


HUNTLEY & PALMERS - *the first name you think of in* **BISCUITS**



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please





Flowers take colour from the sun. The brighter its rays the lovelier they appear—like Sundour unfadable furnishing fabrics.

Sundour

Q2



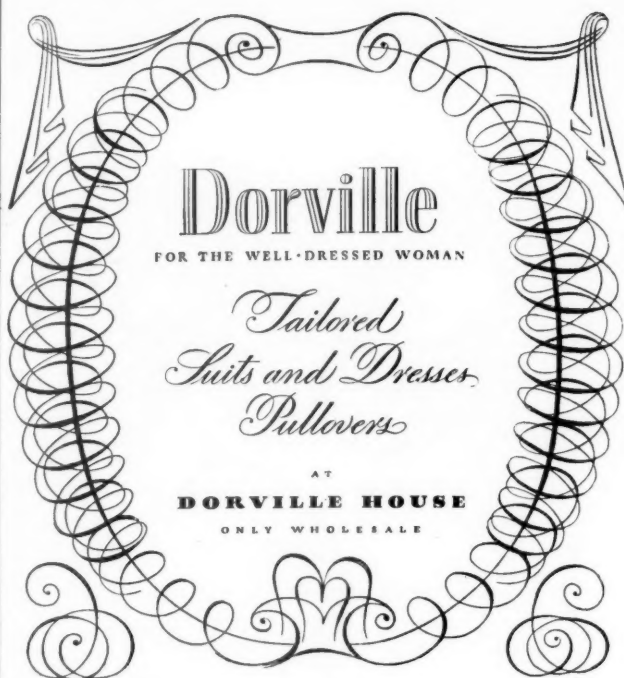
“Sorry—
no more room”

The Union Jack Club—The Service men's own Club—provides bed and food and all usual club amenities for the fighting man in transit through, or on leave in, London. But thousands have to be turned away because of insufficient sleeping quarters.

Subscriptions urgently needed to the £250,000 Fund to increase accommodation. Please give generously. Gifts (or questions) to the Marquess of Cambridge, Hon. Treasurer, Union Jack Club, Waterloo Road, London, S.E.1.

UNION JACK CLUB

This space kindly donated by Edward Sharp & Sons of Maidstone, “The Toffee Specialists.”



ROSE & BLAIRMAN LTD. DORVILLE HOUSE MARGARET ST. LONDON W1

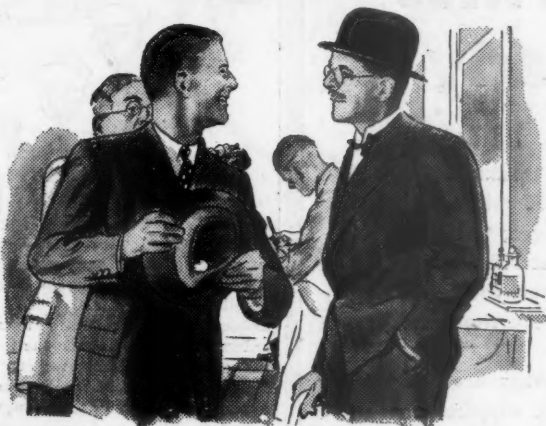


FOUR SQUARE is still made, as ever, from pure tobacco—matured and mellowed by ageing in the wood; free from artificial scents and flavouring.

GEORGE DOBIE & SON LTD., PAISLEY, SCOTLAND

One of the few remaining independent Tobacco firms, established 136 years ago.

**I'm not de-mobbing them
yet, Mr. Barratt!**



I always said these Barratts of mine would see me through the war. But they must hold on a bit longer even after Victory. No sense in spending good money till there's plenty of choice in the shops!

Walk the Barratt way

Barratts, Northampton—branches all over the country.

CYDER

**WITH A NAME YOU
KNOW 'BEHIND' IT**



We used to pride ourselves that there was no part of Britain where you could not get Whiteway's Cyder. Now that is changed. Cyder, like many other things, is being zoned to save transport and labour. We can send our cyder only to certain areas, and many people who for years have held Whiteway's in high esteem, must now be denied it until zoning ends. To the lucky ones in the Whiteway zones we extend our congratulations; to those who must forgo their favourite cyder, we offer our sincere regrets.

WHITEWAY'S CYDER ZONED

Time for Herself



Peace will herald the dawn of a new world for housewives... a world where drudgery will no longer steal youth and looks... yet a world of homes kept brighter and cleaner by H.M.V. labour-saving electrical household appliances.

H M V
ELECTRICAL HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

ELECTRIC IRONS • ELECTRIC WASHERS • RADIANT FIRES
ROOM HEATERS • HOT-PLATES • COOKERS • REFRIGERATORS

The pen of the doctor,
the judge, the K.C. —
Its name is no puzzle
to you or to me!





The Real Princess

HANS Andersen wrote a very charming little fairy tale about The Real Princess who slept so very badly because there was a pea hidden under her bedding!

Many of us are just as fastidious about our bedding—and for them we are now planning post-war "MODERNA" Blankets.

They are to be lovelier even than pre-war. Softest lamb's wool in the newest of pastel shades; unshrinkable and free from that new-blanket smell! They really will be "The Blanket of your Dreams."

MODERNA

Blankets for
Post-War Homes

(Supplied only through Retail Stores)

THOMAS RATCLIFFE & CO. LTD.
MYTHOLMROYD, YORKS.

...but I've got a tin
of NESCAFÉ!



It's only human to show off when you've secured a tin of Nescafé. For we are still unable to keep pace with growing demand. But isn't it worth looking for! You can make, straight in the cup, in a jiffy, stimulating, full-flavoured coffee. No grounds; no bother; no coffee-pot to wash. Just sheer enjoyment from a really good cup of coffee.

NESCAFÉ

A NESTLÉ'S PRODUCT

Blue Prints are ready

The post-war schemes on the Main Line Railways include plans for tracks capable of running speeds of at least 80 miles an hour: the reconstruction of bridges; widening of lines; the completion of electrification works stopped by the war and, later, the rebuilding of hundreds of stations on the most modern lines.

In the meantime the railways are working 24 hours a day to carry the supplies needed for victory.



GWR · LMS · LNER · SR



In reply to many enquiries, we are still unable to import our well-known brands of Sherry and Port. The moment we are in a position to accept orders we shall announce the fact in the press. Until then, we can only thank our innumerable friends for their warm and continued recollection of our specialities, and for their appreciation of our present difficulties.

HARVEY'S

JOHN HARVEY & SONS LTD

Bristol

FOUNDED 1796

Wine Merchants to His Majesty the King

CVS-19



WE
GO TO
GREAT
LENGTHS

TO GET THIS UNIFORMITY

Why, it's the same giraffe every time! Mass Production! Yes, that's our business. At Tube Products Ltd. we are producing Tru-Wel electrically welded steel tubes by the million, all absolutely uniform, in accordance with your specification—all tested and ready for your job.

TRU-WEL

ELECTRICALLY WELDED STEEL TUBES

MADE BY

TUBE PRODUCTS LTD

OLDBURY · BIRMINGHAM

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A MEMBER OF THE TUBE INVESTMENTS GROUP



"LET'S SEE YOU PRODUCE SOME
WILKINSON'S LIQUORICE
ALLSORTS!"



OLD BLEACH

household and embroidery

LINENS
★ and ★
FURNISHING
FABRICS

THE OLD BLEACH LINEN CO. LTD.
RANDALSTOWN, NORTHERN IRELAND

Warms the cockles
of the heart

Red Hackle

Scotland's best Whisky
HEPBURN & ROSS Glasgow

FOR LIGHTNING
SHAVES WITHOUT
STING OR BURN

Change to the finest possible shave. You'll find nothing to touch Colgate Brushless for softening up beards (even with cold water) — for smooth, cool shaving without sting or burn.

1/6 & 2/6 Including Tax

...CHANGE TO
COLGATE
Brushless
SHAVE CREAM

NOT SO EASY
TO GET NOWADAYS
SO GO EASY



RICHARD CRITTALL FOR WARMTH



HE'S PAID TO SAY IT!
'T WILL PAY YOU TO REMEMBER IT!

RICHARD CRITTALL SPECIALISTS IN WARMING AND AIR CONDITIONING

R. CRITTALL & CO. LTD., SPECIALISTS IN COOKING APPARATUS AND KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

RICHARD CRITTALL & COMPANY LTD., ALDWYCH HOUSE, W.C.2

R. CRITTALL & CO. LTD., SPECIALISTS IN PANEL WARMING AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

Say it
again!

If children are to be kept safe from accident (and perhaps from death) on the roads, constant repetition of the rules of road-safety is necessary. Teach continually... the alternative may be a lifetime of regret.

What do I do...?

I give my children regular instructions in "kerb drill" — and I keep at it until they follow these rules instinctively.

1. At the kerb, HALT.
2. Eyes right.
3. Eyes left.
4. Eyes right again. Then, IF THE ROAD IS CLEAR
5. Quick march.
6. Don't rush: cross in an orderly manner.

If I drive a car, I keep a special watch for children on the road.

Issued by the Ministry of Information
Space presented to the Nation by
the Brewers' Society

You can see it's a good shoe...
but you may not know why



It is made with infinite care... of good English leather... on a last that has become famous amongst shoemakers. The skill behind this very comfortable and good-looking shoe has been handed down from father to son for over 70 years.

CHURCH'S famous English shoes



Chilprufe
REGD for CHILDREN

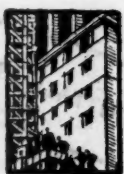
nature's
own protection

CHILPRUFE is the finest PURE WOOL treated scientifically to increase its beautiful softness. A secret Chilprufe process renders it unshrinkable and durable, and through repeated washings it retains its colour, even texture and shape. At present made only for Infants and young Children.

Also CHILPRUFE Dresses, Rompers, Cardigans, Buster Suits for toddlers, Shoes for Babies, and Man-Tailored Coats for Children

CHILPRUFE LIMITED
General Director: JOHN A. BOLTON
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**CHILPRUFE IS PURE
WOOL MADE PERFECT**

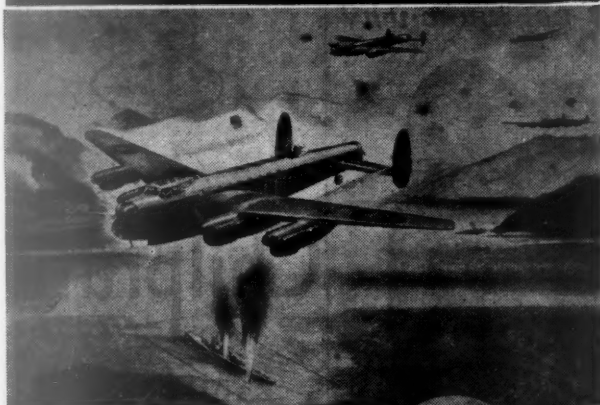


CRITTALL WINDOWS

WHEN YOU REBUILD

CRITTALL MANUFACTURING CO., LTD., 210 HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1

HAWKER SIDDELEY ACHIEVEMENTS



The end of the Tirpitz

Lancasters of Bomber Command scored their most spectacular success when 29 of them flew to Tromsø Fjord and dropped 12,000 lb. bombs on the Tirpitz. Only a Lancaster could carry the bomb-load needed to sink this capital ship. As the Lancaster took the lead in war, Armstrong Siddeley cars will set the lead in peace.

The story behind the post-war

ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY Cars

ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY MOTORS · Branch of HAWKER SIDDELEY AIRCRAFT Co. Ltd.



Steeling a march! Trust Gillette's fine-tempered edge to get through where the going's toughest. On the Elbe or on the chin, Gillette in battledress smooths the way—to that victory smile! Gillette in battledress, maybe—but Gillette true to form!

Gillette in battledress

"Standard" Gillette Blades (plain steel) 2d each, including Purchase Tax. Fit all Gillette razors, old or new.

If you can't always get them, remember they're worth trying for! Production still restricted.



SIXTH SENSE!

RADIO has set signposts in the seas! The 'seeing-ears' which steer shipping safely through fogs are radio devices. Soon the vast experience of radio-electronics now being devoted by G.E.C. to the cause of Victory will be re-directed to the arts of peace. And your post-war Radio and Television will be much the finer instruments for the new skill and knowledge we have gained during five years' national service.

G.E.C.
RADIO & TELEVISION

'THE SOUND AND SIGHT OF THE FUTURE'



PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCVIII No. 5444

May 16 1945

Charivaria

Now is the time for all who are about to say "I told you so," to let it pass in the general acclamation.

Cases of V-Day drunkenness have been surprisingly small. Of course more may come to light as things settle down.



When to Switch ON
"6.0. Shipmates Asnore."
Radio programme.

As an immediate Victory concession to agriculture it is thought that farmers are now being officially permitted to make hay two days before the Ministry of Information says the sun shines.

Stockholm can now see the sun freely again.

A semi-military ball has been held in Burnley. Civilians are coming into their own again; several were seen here practising the latest sit-out.

Now that the Allied armies have finally defeated Germany it is only fair to point out that Fleet Street thought of it first.

The old order changeth: Berlin is receiving rumours of reported movements in Stockholm.

150,000 tractors are now in use on British farms. This figure was quoted by a farmer who, after waiting for a taxi, declared that it was time London was mechanized.



The problem now facing the Allies in Germany isn't so much what to do with the ex-Nazis as where to find one.

A newspaper correspondent appeals for puzzles to send to the Forces. Perhaps the Income-Tax people have some for which they can find no demand?

The Minister of Agriculture reminds us that Britain faces an acute shortage of trees. It will be many years before we are out of the wood we are practically out of now.

A suburban gardener says that last year he planted cucumber seeds, and got marrows. Considering that horticultural rivalry is so keen we think he was very conscientious to admit they were marrows.

When German children are provided with school-books in which there is no reference to the Nazi regime their grandparents will be able to help them with their homework.



Impending Apology

"The people of Diepholz regard the refugees—officially they are described as displaced parsons, a horrible description..."—*Evening paper.*

A ghost in Essex seems to walk right through a solid table. A correspondent says he had the same eerie feeling when he crossed a room recently monopolized by a Morrison shelter.

Nearly all the new cars will have sunshine roofs, we are told. Manufacturers have a naïve confidence in the meteorological future of this country.

Lessons of the War

A Personal Record

WHAT has this great global conflict taught us hitherto? I can only speak for myself.

1. I can cook.

The whole gamut and gallimaufry of cooking is not mine, but simple cookery I have at my fingers' ends. Cooking is the application of considerable heat to various types of liquid or solid matter, in order to make them more or less edible as the case may be.

The student should not be confused by technical terms. Thus the phrase "to bring to the boil" means to boil, and the verb "to simmer" means to boil slowly. "To chop very finely" means to cut into little bits.

Many cooks begin their instructions by saying "Make a *roux*." A far more useful recipe is "Do not make a *roux*. Just cook the muck."

The first thing that strikes the student about cooking is the fact that liquid material, when affected by undue heat, comes out on to the floor, while solid material stays where it is and becomes black. This is known as the thermodynamic law.

All stuff put into a saucepan or a frying pan should therefore, when the decision to light the gas has been reached, be observed with the eye of a mountain eagle. There is a thing for lighting the gas without using matches, but I have not mastered this. Having no matches, turn on the electric fire until the heat is sufficient to ignite a piece of paper or wood. Now kindle the stove. The holes that do not kindle immediately will kindle later, owing to the continuous escape of gas. Now cook.

E.g., To Cook Rissoles.

Take a lot of perfectly good bits of cold meat and vegetable matter, and cram them into a kind of inverted metal cone on the top of a hand-mill, which can be clamped to the kitchen table if you have one. If you have no kitchen table, you cannot cook rissoles. Turn the handle attached to the machine clockwise, and a number of pink worms will come slowly out of the nozzle on to the table, or a plate if you have remembered to put it there. Throw the pink worms into a bowl, together with some milk which has been liquefied, and some eggs which have been dried. Twiddle all this nonsense around with a wooden spoon. If you have no wooden spoon, you cannot cook rissoles.

Lay on a board some prefabricated bread crumbs and French chalk, or flour. Take small slabs of the mess out of the bowl and fashion them curiously with the hands. Roll them in the debris mentioned above, which will adhere to them. Close the eyes, if nausea supervenes. Shove a nasty slab of grease into the frying-pan and kindle (see above) the stove. When the grease stops spitting at your eyes, lob in the lumps. They will sizzle. Keep turning them over with a kind of flat thing that there ought to be for turning them over with, until they are more brown than they were pink. The book now says "Serve." This is nonsense. You are not playing lawn tennis. Take them out carefully and put them on a dish and eat them. You will not like them at all.

In cooking meat, potatoes or other hard articles, all that is needed, except the eye of an eagle, is a fork. If the fork will not go into the thing, it is still inedible; if it does, it is done. In the latter case it may be eaten, if you have nothing better to do. English plain cooks and most restaurants do not observe this rule.

In making soup, grasp the tin firmly with the left hand and aim a blow at it, with a kind of sharp, but complicated,

dagger provided for the purpose. If the centre of the top of the tin is punctured, the soup will only come out guggling or not at all. If you can carve it neatly round the edge, you are a hero of the great war. If you miss the tin, telephone for an ambulance. You will have cut off part of your left hand.

Water, milk, oil, treacle, or any other rubbish can be mixed with the soup in the saucepan. All boil over with equal ease. I forgot to say "add salt and pepper to taste." This phrase, like others, is entirely meaningless. The one thing to remember about salt and pepper is that you cannot subtract them when they are there.

2. I can make a bed.

Examine the bed carefully, and remove any sleeper found in it. Tear off the outer integuments one by one, and throw them on to a chair. Hit the mattress a lot, and heave it over the other way round. There is no instrument for doing this. Replace the integuments in the reverse order, tucking them in wherever ingenuity can devise a way. Remember that the top sheet, rather than the bottom one, should be turned down near the pillow. If this is forgotten, entrance to the bed can only be effected by crawling in under the blanket or through the mattress. When ready, replace the sleeper.

3. I can sweep a carpet.

To sweep a carpet, remove all the furniture into the passage outside. Fasten the end of the snake attached to the vacuum cleaner to the thing on the wall near the floor. Press the switch. This starts a noise like a bomber squadron, but there is no need for alarm. Now proceed as with a lawn-mower, but skipping nimbly from time to time to avoid the fate of Laocoön. The vacuum-cleaner will not seem to be doing much work, but it has a pouch like a pelican's, capable of consuming, with a great relish, vast quantities of cigarette ash, fluff, grit, soot, subsoil and cotton threads. Buttons and pencils are spat out with disgust or break the machinery. Disconnect and return to base when the instrument has gorged its fill. Refurnish the room simply to taste.

4. I can wash a shirt.

This has been rendered doubly necessary because the laundry only operates once a month, and because it has a most ingenious war-time apparatus for destroying shirts, with long steel claws and pincers quite different from the ordinary peace-time shredding machine.

To wash a shirt, swirl it about in a basin with a lot of soap-flakes, throw it in the bath, wring it out, wrap it in a towel, sit on it, throw on the floor, jump on it, hang it up to dry, spread it out, bring an iron to the boil, let it simmer over the shirt, only scorching the places that are not likely to show. Replace the rest of the shirt on the body.

I doubt whether the Prime Minister himself has learnt so many lessons from this war as I. He has not had my chances.

5. I cannot shop. I hope to be able to do this when we have finished the war with Japan. EVOE.

The Spirit of Victory

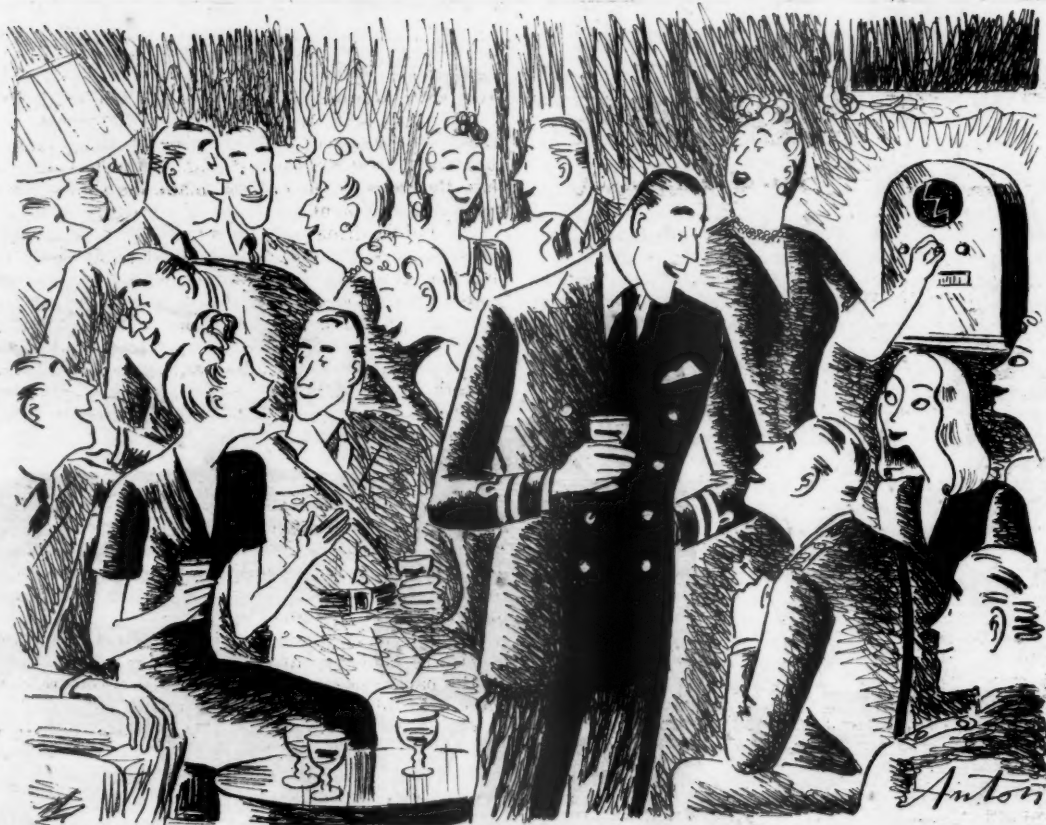
"When confined to bed as I am there is really very little one can do to celebrate VE day, but fortunately I possess one V-necked nightdress and I have asked Nurse to air that in readiness."

From an invalid's letter.



THE WARDEN OF EMPIRE

Reprinted from Punch, October 1 1941



"Anybody want the Brains Trust?"

Report on VE Day

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I cannot refrain from telling you, just in simple unaffected terms, how much I enjoyed VE Day.

I woke with a feeling of exultation, the sort of light-headed sensation with which one used to wake up on the last day of term, and immediately sprang out of bed on the wrong side. This is said to make one bad-tempered for the rest of the day, but the immediate effect, when one's bed is against the wall, is to bruise the knees and drive the breath out of the body.

When I recovered consciousness it was too late to get any breakfast, so I dressed and went straight to the office. The staff at a military headquarters must be present and at the alert even on VE Day. We must be prepared at any moment to come to the aid of the Civil Power with all our resources, or to acknowledge a message of congratulation from the Army Council. Nothing came in, however, and at seventeen hundred hours I left for the Metropolis.

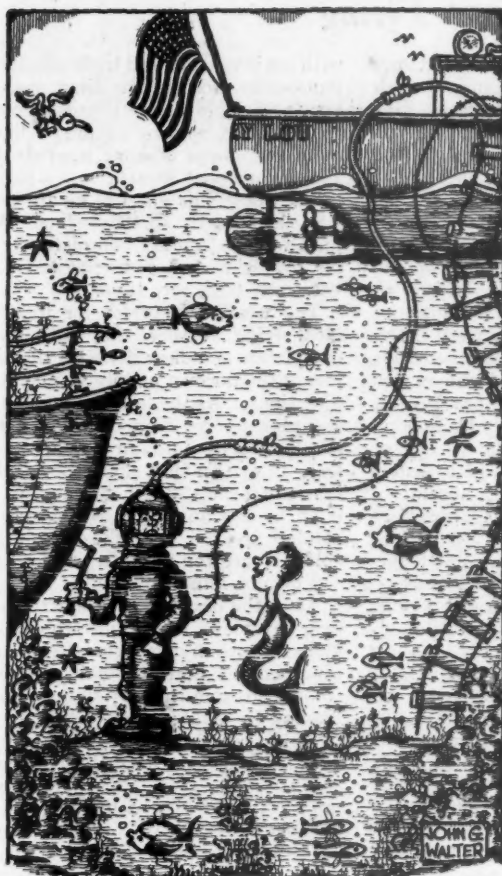
It was crowded.

I failed to see the Royal Family on the balcony of

Buckingham Palace, because at the time of their appearance my bruised knees gave way and a number of people stood on my body to get a better view. The crowd was very good-tempered and careful not to tread on my face more than could be helped.

I failed to see the Prime Minister because he did not appear during the time I was in Whitehall. I should not have seen him in any case since there were three very tall men in front of me with rather bulging necks, and I did not like to move sideways for fear of pushing the people at the far end of Whitehall out into Trafalgar Square. The thing to remember in a crowd is that any movement causes a sort of ripple right through the multitude, only instead of losing momentum as a ripple does, the movement grows in volume like a snowball; so that a man trying to get his handkerchief out in Piccadilly Circus may easily crush a police horse to death against the Marble Arch.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



'GOT ANY GUM, CHUM?'

I failed to get anything to eat, since the places I tried to enter were full and those I didn't try to enter were shut. However, I got jammed up against a man in the Mall who had had quite a good meal at some upstage place or other and very kindly described it to me. He said he had had *Fruits de mer à la Victorie, Consommé des Héros Alliés* and some sort of *Poulet with Choux-fleurs des Vainqueurs*. (I hold no brief for his French, I only attempt to reproduce what I heard.) He said the *poulet* was good, and described a pleasant wine to accompany it, but alas! he could only get a pint of ice-cold lager. I said I felt really upset to hear he had had no wine, but of course lager was better than nothing on a warm evening. He replied that in the right place and at the right time he was very fond of a good light beer. In Germany he had had much good beer, also excellent hock in quantity and aha! roast duck that could fairly be described as second to none. He didn't know of anything he had more of a weakness for than roast duck—unless it might be ortolans broiled in champagne.

This conversation for some reason made me rather hungry, and a sudden anxiety to get away from the man came over me. But it is not easy to get away from people in very big crowds, and he had recollected several more

quite palatable dishes before I had managed to put a yard between us. And even then he still had my hand to talk to, which had got wedged into his waistcoat and wouldn't come adrift. In the end somebody prised it loose with an umbrella.

After this I slipped off to a quiet side street and linked arms with fourteen sailors, three Americans, a Pole and (I rather thought) M. Molotov, though the papers say he was in San Francisco. This party were making a sweep down the street, and it seemed better at my age to be the sweeper than the swept. The exercise made me thirsty, as well as hungry, and I went in search of water.

The public drinking troughs were full of bodies and I firmly believe I might have gone straight home by tube in a temper at this stage had not the Underground station I attempted to enter been closed. This was a bit of luck, because if the station had been open I should have missed the chance of linking arms with fourteen Americans, three Poles and a sailor, who had a plan to sweep away the Victoria Memorial in order to get a better view of Buckingham Palace. I asked them where M. Molotov was, but got no coherent reply.

It was now late enough for me not to have to worry about a train home, so I walked. When I had walked for six miles I suddenly realized I had only another five miles to go, and this thought cheered me so much that I sat down on the kerb for an hour in company with three R.A.F. men and a dozen assorted householders. We didn't sing or dance, but were just quietly happy and, for myself, just the tiniest bit hungry and thirsty.

When I got back to my billet I found somebody had put a Victory hedgehog in my bed. This was not mentioned in the papers next morning, though in other respects they gave a faithful account of VE Day.

Yours, etc.

H. F. E.



"We can't very well leave her out, because she knitted the net."

What I Feel About Flying

ON the off-chance that there may be people in the world who have never flown, I am going to set down what I feel about flying. I hope that, if she reads this article, the ten-months-old baby who flew with me from Cairo last Wednesday will be amused. For her guidance, I am the pale gentleman who made such a scene when her parents wanted her cot to go in the tail of the aircraft where, in my opinion, there was a good deal of weight already.

I always keep an eye on the distribution of the weight out of consideration for the crew, who have other things to attend to; I admire, though I do not understand, men who fly for a living, and do not care for them to lose their jobs owing to the thoughtlessness of their passengers.

First, the aircraft. I like a medium-sized machine with as many engines as possible. I like it to be fairly new, but not straight out of the packing-case; it upsets me when the pilot delays take-off while he strips a lot of Cellophane off the instrument panel, and it is actually a comfort to me to notice that the paintwork is slightly worn. This does not mean that I welcome large irregularly-shaped patches sewn on to the wings, especially when they are badly frayed or the corners are turned back.

It is always a surprise to me that experienced air travellers, when briefed as to the type of aircraft they are to travel in, begin at once to ask questions about the seating, the heating and other matters concerned purely with their bodily comfort. They want to know if the seats have adjustable head-rests, if there are little folding tables so that they can write letters, whether there will be too much noise to sleep, and whether there will be adequate supplies of coffee and sandwiches. I think there must be something of the Spartan in me, because I am never impelled to ask these questions; indeed, I should be ashamed to do so; they seem to me to indicate a luxury-loving trait which I should not care to admit as a part of my character. There is only one question I ever want to ask about an aircraft in which I am to fly, and that is—will it stay up? A satisfactory answer to this disposes of all my problems, though I seldom find anybody who will give me a positive guarantee, the tendency more often being to make some facetious reply which could only be really funny in completely different circumstances.

I am rather particular about my pilot. I like him to be young, though not too young; there must be no hint of rakishness or inexperience, but on the other hand he should not be too mature either, as this may mean that he has done so much flying that he imagines nothing can ever happen to him now. I like him to look as if he has had an excellent night's sleep the night before, with nothing stronger to drink than some reliable nerve-tonic; he should not appear too fresh, however, because when a young man feels on top of the world and the sky is bright and clear and he has several thousand horsepower under his fingers, he may possibly be tempted, out of sheer *joie de vivre*, to fly a little faster, or higher, or lower than is absolutely wise. I like my pilot to be absolutely wise.

As to his demeanour, I am particular about this too. I prefer a little gravity in a pilot, particularly before take-off. I like him to be cautious, too, though not so cautious, naturally, as to suggest that he is worried about anything. I never object if he keeps me waiting while he tests the engines and the controls; so far as I am concerned he can go on doing this until he is completely satisfied, and if after half an hour or so he decides not to take the machine up at all, then that is perfectly acceptable to me. I am not one of those passengers who are in a ferment to get off the ground.

I do not care for the pilot who arrives at the aircraft at the last minute, says, "For Pete's sake! this old steam-chicken again?"—shrugs slightly as the port engine misses twice, and roars off along the runway unwrapping a packet of chewing-gum with one hand. Once I am in the air, however, I am agreeable to a slight rise in the pilot's spirits; if he turns to me with a carefree wink just as I have become convinced that we have left the tail-plane behind in the last cloud but one, I do not take the slightest offence, and may even wink back if I have sufficient control over my eye-muscles.

One thing I especially dislike in a pilot is the making of abrupt movements as he sits at the controls. I do not like him to dart sudden glances at three or four instrument-dials one after the other, begin jabbering into his microphone and rapidly manipulating levers and switches, straining this way and that in his seat to see over the side. A pilot wishing to be popular

with me is well advised to sit absolutely motionless most of the time, making very occasional leisurely movements of an obviously routine nature; I like a little movement of some kind so that I know he is still awake.

The pilots I like best of all are those who sing quietly to themselves. Any pilot's voice coming complacently to me over the inter-com. can have my vote over Gigli any time.

The weather I prefer for flying is ideal flying weather; that is to say, a completely cloudless sky with the hard line of the horizon plainly visible in all directions. At the first sign of a cloud the phrase "No bigger than a man's hand" comes into my head and I keep an eye on that cloud to see what it is getting up to. I do not care for it to be too hot, in case the aircraft catches fire, nor do I like it to be too cold, in case the aircraft gets iced up.

I do not mind how high I fly.

As to the best type of country to fly over my views are subject to change. When I am flying over the land I always notice that the country appears to offer little in the way of emergency landing grounds; when I am flying over the sea I try to comfort myself with the knowledge that this particular aircraft will keep afloat for seven minutes, but really wish that we were over the land after all. Flying directly above an infinite stretch of hard, unobstructed sandy coastline is not to be despised, though I never allow myself to forget that any forced landing of ours may easily coincide with somebody else's from the opposite direction.

I am sorry that parachutes have gone out of date. Before I went up in the air I always had a parachute at the back of my mind, so to say, but the authorities do not have them at the back of theirs. Parachutes, they seem to think, are a pathetic relic of the days when aircraft were unreliable, and are now just a nuisance to everybody, taking up space and getting in the way. True, I was given a Mae West on my first trip in case we came down in the sea, but the man who told us how to blow them up was very off-hand about the whole business, making it clear that any such contingency was ludicrous and that the idea of safety equipment was to comfort the passengers psychologically. Thinking that parachutes had perhaps been overlooked I mentioned the matter to one of the crew as we made our way to the aircraft; he laughed and said that we

Fugate



The nearest we ever got was one that fell away at the far end of the road, back in '41.



Yes, one fell in the same street as this—that was ten years ago.



Fifteen years ago, in the spring, we had a thousand-pounder right in the road outside.

should be flying along the coast most of the way, and it would be a simple matter to put the machine down in the sea. Another passenger who was with us and seemed to know a little geography, asked casually whether we didn't cross the Pyrenees, to which the member of the crew replied that if we came down in the Pyrenees it would save the fag of blowing up the Mae Wests.

The other passenger and I then struck up a conversation about the rate of exchange in Greece.

But the human mind is a wonderful thing. Before we had been flying an hour I had persuaded myself that a man wearing a parachute would find it difficult to get out of the rather small emergency exits. Naturally, I only pursued this line of thought just so far as it suited me, leaving its logical conclusion in the air, if I may put it like that. Indeed, I only wore a parachute on one occasion. I found it in the tail of a plane which was sitting stationary in the air eight thousand feet above the Syrian desert, and I hooked it on greedily when nobody was looking. It was a great comfort to me, and it was only when I asked a fellow-passenger to unhook it for me on landing that I found it to be a rubber dinghy.

Without a doubt the choice of fellow-passengers is important, particularly when waiting to go out to the aircraft for take-off. The best people to choose are, those who have never flown before. There is a cheerful, confident excitement about them. It is remarkable, however, how the high spirits of such a group can be dispelled by the arrival of an old hand. He looks at the weather and says we shall have a bit of a struggle to get above the clouds; he looks at the map and says we shall have to climb like mad as soon as we are airborne if we are to clear the mountains; he makes a little grimace when one of us says "I hear

we're flying in a Q——. I hoped we should be flying in a Q——," and when pressed to interpret the grimace he says flippantly that a Q—— is all right if the ailerons don't drop off at the first air-pocket. Then he takes one of the crew off into a corner, and the now thoroughly depressed group of tyros, watching the pair of them out of their eye- corners while continuing to make brittle and meaningless conversation, notice that they wag their heads a good deal before their conversation becomes suddenly audible on such terminating expressions as, "Still, hope for the best, eh?" and "Always been all right so far, what?" and a couple of patently hollow laughs.

What I feel about flying is that the best part of it is stepping out of the aircraft after landing. I understand, now, why it is that celebrities photographed stepping out of aircraft on landing are always wearing those wide, carefree smiles, just as if there was nothing in it. There isn't, then, of course, because they're out of it. If anybody ever published a photograph of them stepping in, the expression on their celebrated faces would do a serious mischief to the future of civil flying, and would cause hundreds of people like me to declare that they didn't care if they never went up flying at all.

J. B. B.

○ ○

Attenuated Contiguity Corner

"A blast wall has been erected around the factory together with a look-out post on the roof."—From a letter to a surveyor.

○ ○

An Experiment With Time

"Time will be taken for a discussion on organising and canvassing plans for the summer months to coincide with an extensive organising effort to operate in the early winter."—From a circular letter.



It was this month, twenty years ago—one came down smack on our very doorstep: two tons it weighed.



Thirty years ago, this very week, we had a four-tonner bang through the roof.



Forty years to-day, and shall I ever forget it? It was the largest bomb they ever dropped, and where do you think it fell? Right plumb in the middle of this very hearthrug!



"On the new plans there's going to be a subway here."

Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XIV

WHEN Amos begins to tell a story that he has not made up himself he never says "Stop me if you've heard this," for fear that somebody might make the attempt and give him the fatigue of overcoming it. The nearest thing to a concession of this kind that I have ever heard him make is "I am reminded of a story—if you've heard it, don't apologize—"

"One interesting job I did while I was working in the office of that literary agent," Amos recalled, "was in connection with a novel, written by an earnest English lady, that contained an American character. The authoress was not at all sure of her grasp of the American idiom and I, because such things interested me, prevailed on my employers to give me the job of vetting the dialogue and making the necessary alterations. For some time all went well. I was particularly strong on the things most people overlook, the *slight* differences. Thus where she had made her American say 'Threads by the thousand' I was careful to add an *s* at the end of *thousand*, where she had 'as we're here, let's do so-and-so' I altered it to 'as long as we're here . . .'; 'look round' became 'look around,' 'on behalf' became 'in behalf,' and in 'first time for years,' *for* became *in*. But after a time I grew tired of the colourlessness of the character and tended to alter too much."

Amos stopped and sat looking into the past for some

moments. "She seemed to think I had misrepresented her sense," he resumed at length, with a slight air of injury, "when she found I had changed 'Time, the great healer,' into 'Time, the big heel.'"

"She was an exasperating woman," he went on. "Not bad-looking in a statuesque kind of way, if you like that kind of way; but exasperating. It so happened that in the course of negotiations—the *firm's* negotiations—I, because the glossy personage we all called our Social Editor was down with 'flu, had to take her to lunch, three times, and I still remember the fury she aroused in me. I was younger then."

We looked up.

"... Incredible as it may seem," said Amos with a snarl, and proceeded: "Each time, it was evidently a habit of hers, *each time* she picked up the menu and read out all the things on it as if they were her own bright ideas, just thought of. 'Or you can have *roast beef*,' she would say brightly" (Amos assumed an intimidating air of charm), "with *boiled* potatoes! and cabbage, or baked *potatoes*, and cauliflower; or you can have *spinach*. Or there's *steak*, if you don't mind waiting a little; or there's *roast veal*'—all this, mind you," said Amos, "while I was two feet away from her with another copy of the menu which I was perfectly capable of reading for myself. The only thing that prevented me from pushing her over with the table was the thinly-veiled sympathy of the waiters, one of whom contrived to stamp on a loose floor-board like a piano-key and make her chair wobble every time he went past. I doubted that man's tip."

"At the firm's expense," said somebody.

Amos gave him a dirty look. "Certainly, at the firm's expense," he said. "What do you take me for, an altruist? I lost my sunny nature in the service of bad art; would you have me spend all my money as well?"

He is very hard sometimes on pompous little men, of the sort familiar in almost any pub, who like to talk in a solemn and weighty manner about nothing in particular. They have a characteristic style that may be described as the style into which the semi-literate naturally fall when they write a letter to the newspaper, and to hear it spoken always seems to annoy Amos even more than to see it written. One evening he happened to catch a phrase from a narrative by a small slight man in a rusty bowler hat who was speaking to a friend near us. In a strong, harsh, rasping Cockney voice the small man enunciated the words "But that was . . . beefore I heard . . . what subsequently transpired . . . in the matter," and then fell silent, sinking his chin into his collar and staring at his companion significantly.

Amos began to growl to himself, but something distracted his attention for a time, until in due course the small man became audible again talking, it appeared, about the war. "What . . . in *my* view . . . appears seeof-eveedent," he was saying, "is . . . *it must go on to the end*."

Amos was sitting a little behind him and to one side. He struggled to his feet and thrust his face in front of the small man, sucking in his lower lip in a peculiar manner and making his ragged moustache bristle as he said "You mean you've considered the possibility that when it stops that might *not* be the end?"

The man looked startled and then doubtful. Before he could think of a reply Amos said "Yes? What will it be, then?"

Thus driven, the man adopted a sound old stratagem and said "Thanks very much, I'll 'ave a pint." R. M.

PUNCH COMFORTS FUND

THIS Fund, through the generosity of its subscribers, has provided vast quantities of comforts for the Fighting Forces, the Merchant Navy and for the Bombed. Comforts have also been supplied for the Forces of our Allies.

We feel that the time has now come to provide what comforts we can for the men, women and children of the liberated areas, and for the pitiful human beings released from concentration camps. Many appeals are being made to us to help relieve this terrible situation.

PLEASE HELP

Donations will be most gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch, PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

As it Were, So to Speak

THERE are occasions when I do not see eye to eye with the political correspondent of the *News Chronicle*. I found myself at loggerheads with him quite recently—on the occasion of Sir John Anderson's Budget statement.

It may be remembered that Sir John said: "Taxation of this kind [on private incomes] should not be continued without material relaxation." That is a verbatim report. I can vouch for its accuracy. I heard it myself and wrote it down on my knee—or rather, on a pad on my knee. Now see what the political correspondent of the *News Chronicle* had to say about it—"He [the Chancellor of the Exchequer] emphasized the word 'material' in such a way as to suggest that Income Tax might be reduced by, as much as 2s. or 2s. 6d. in the £ in the next few months."

I was never more surprised in my life than when I read this. Two shillings or half-a-crown, indeed! I tell you I heard the speech myself and I am absolutely certain that the emphasis in question was worth no more than a shilling—one and sixpence at most. Moreover, I am almost certain that my interpretation is supported by Lord Keynes. I saw him lean across to Lord Catto and my ears deceived me if he did not say "There, what did I tell you? A bob off!"

First let me tell the reader, who has a very natural interest in this matter, exactly how Sir John emphasized the word "material." He did not leap at it like a crossword puzzle enthusiast solving an anagram. He did not dwell on it like a crooner discovering a resonant note. Nor did he pause deliberately before uttering the fateful word like the foreman of a jury. He did no more than brush against it in passing.

The word itself is interesting. Would Sir John have used "material" if he had been thinking at the half-crown level? Of course not. He would have said "substantial," "very considerable," "altogether unexpected" or, to make it quite clear, "not inconsiderable." For the benefit of my friend at the *News Chronicle* I append my own formula, worked out carefully over the years. It may help him to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| One significant reduction (relaxation, etc.) | = No change |
| One tangible do. | = No change |
| One considerable do. | = No change |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| One real reduction (relaxation, etc.) | = 3d. in the £ |
| One material do. | = 1s. in the £ |
| One substantial do. | = 2s. in the £ |
| One not inconsiderable do. | = 2s. 6d. (or more) in the £ |

Personally I am very much opposed to this kind of thing. It debases the language. If it were persisted in English would lose its preciseness and would become no better than Swahili. The practice wins new disciples every day. Take my tobacconist, for example. His "No" can mean:

1. Don't think you can deceive me, my fine fellow, by removing your spectacles and walking with that ridiculous limp. You had a box only an hour ago.
2. Yes, as soon as I've got rid of this blistering female. Look at those petrol bottles for a few minutes.
3. To-morrow, but keep it dark.
4. No, this is a tobacconist's

—and lots of other things.

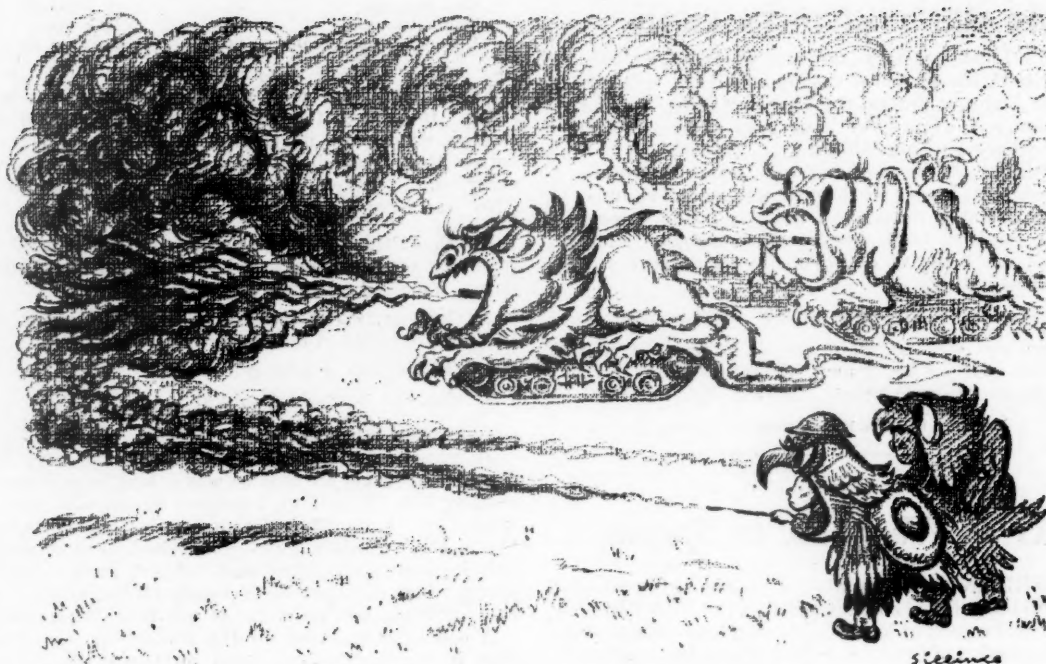
To return to the Budget speech. I felt sorry for Sir John. You could see that he was itching to say something exciting like "Therefore, I propose to cancel all arrears of taxes," or "I am advised that a reduction in the rate of Death Duty would not necessarily lead to more suicides." But he had a thankless task. Apart from a hint that another budget might be necessary (Whoopee!) this year, he had no comfort to offer. It was fiscally impossible.

A colleague summed up the Budget speech by saying that it was particularly hard on the bottom dog. At least, I think he said dog.

HOD.



"Two houses came in for sale yesterday, and before you could say Duncan Sandys, PH-T!"



"I'd like to know what all this intensive training's in preparation for, Bert."

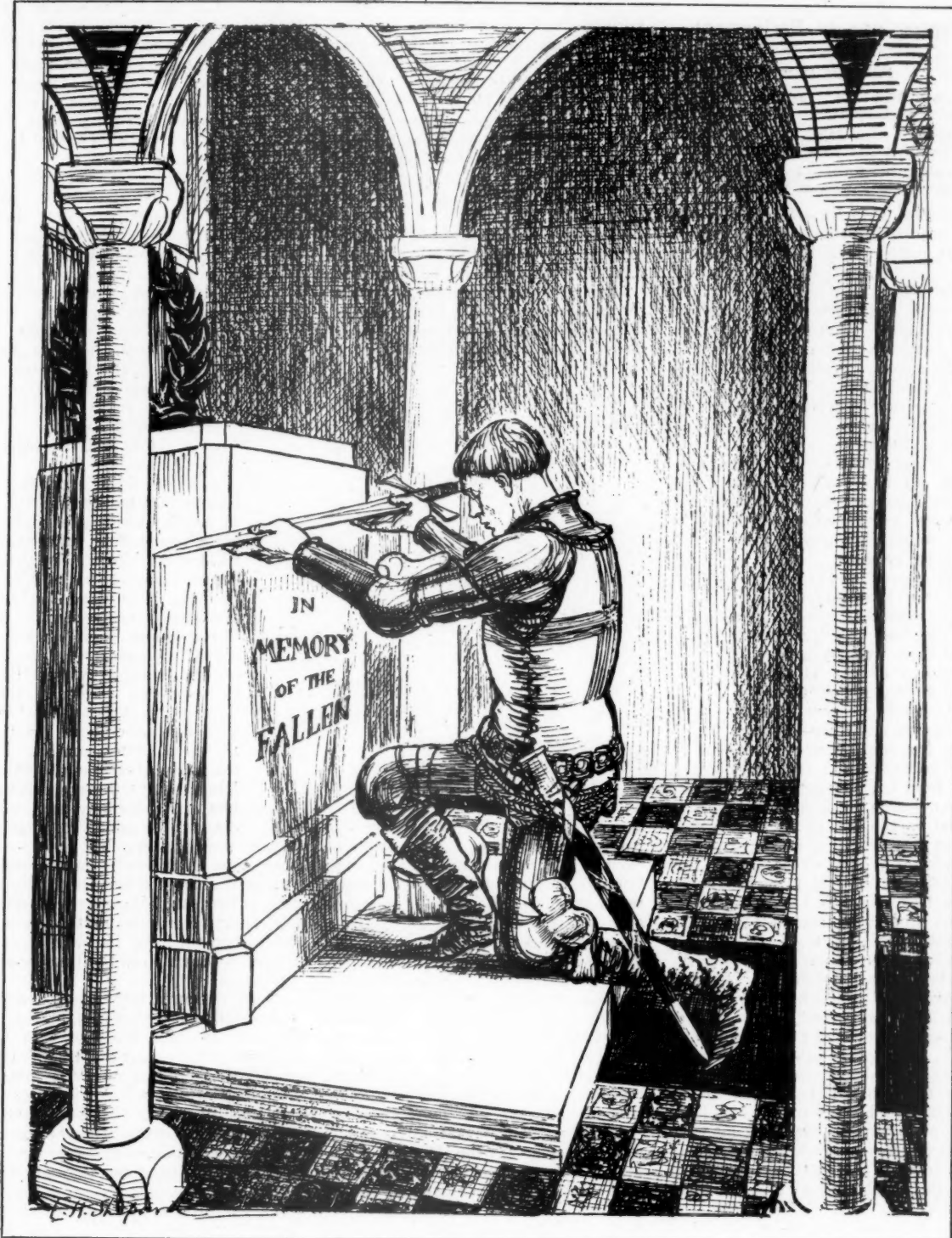
Quis Desiderio?

AH, me, the bright grass withers, and the flower
Fades, and the ageless destiny of man
Condemns him to destroy the thing he loves:
My pipe is smashed, my last dear pipe is smashed.
The bowl that burned that fragrant sacrifice
And wrapped me in that so distinctive air
Is gathered to its fathers, and descends
In shattered majesty the path of shade.
Now listlessly I wander through the club
With no protrusive censer at my lip,
A butt for waghood: "We had thought," they say,
"You smoked a pipe"; or, "Does your nostril
mark,
Since the new-lifted black-out, how refined
An atmosphere invests us?" or again,
"We greet the respite from that V16."
So rail they, and applaud the starting tear.

Where find its equal? nay, where anything
That has a bowl and mouth-piece, and will smoke?
Round many a West End pipe-shop have I been,
Have asked five score tobacconists, and fled
Attended by a hundred mirthless laughs.

Nor has the stranger in the street escaped
My shrewd inquiry. Such a one I stopped
In Holborn, and "Fumiferous sir," I cried,
"How came you by yon briar?" and the man
Started, and thrice looked round him, then with play
Of cryptic feature and slow-winking eye
Thus darkly whispered. "*I imagined it.*"
And one I held in Bond Street, and besought,
"Who gave to you that pipe?" and he replied,
"My godfathers and godmothers, dear sir,
At my baptizing," and his great sides shook.
And I waylaid a third man in the Tube,
And grasped his reeking bowl, and grimly sought
To wrest it from its anchorage; but he
Forestalled my desperate purpose, and the pipe,
Like some mute word Homeric, bode unwinged
Nor crossed the barrier of his godless teeth.

Ah, fruitless mission! now the last dim hope
Has spread its wings, and left my bosom bare
To pain incurable and total gloom.
There is no balm can soothe me any more;
My pipe is gone, and I am on the rack. M. H. L.



DEDICATION

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Tuesday, May 8th.—House of Commons: Victory!

Wednesday, May 9th.—House of Commons: The Morrow of Victory.

Thursday, May 10th.—House of Commons: Celebration of Victory.

Tuesday, May 8th.—Members made their way to the Houses of Parliament to-day with the aid of smiling but firm members of the Metropolitan Police. That sentence should not be misunderstood. The only reason for the assistance of the police was the good-humoured crowd of some 30,000 of the citizenry which pressed about the Palace of Westminster, cheering everything and everybody, and generally making a joyful noise.

For this was The Day for which all had toiled, wept, sweated and many had bled, for more than five years. This was Victory in Europe Day—VE Day for short.

For weary weeks, months and years the world had waited for the news that was about to be imparted, and the crowds stood there wedged in front of the home of the Mother of Parliaments, giving three—or more—rousing cheers to each new arrival, and three—or more—not less rousing, when there were no arrivals at all. Flags flew from every window, and a vast Union Jack had been placed at the top of Victoria Tower by Mr. DUNCAN SANDYS, the Minister of Works, whose artistic and enthusiastic eye had seen to the decoration of public buildings.

The Commons assembled to the distant refrain of that Old English ballad: "Roll Out The Barrel!" Members crowded into the Chamber too overjoyed to think of business.

Mr. Speaker arrived, the severity of his uniform relieved by the gold and black robe that appears only on occasions of high State. Sir CHARLES HOWARD, the Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr. ST. GEORGE KINGDOM and Mr. ERIC EDENBOROUGH, his deputies, all wore the lace ruffles and cuffs appropriate to the occasion. Even those austere (if invariably charming and urbane) officers, Mr. "ERIC" METCALFE and Major EDWARD FELLOWES, Clerks of the House, wore their Orders of the Bath about their necks, giving an unwonted splash of splendour to their severely-businesslike Table.

Your scribe has missed no great Parliamentary occasion in the last twenty years, but this was the greatest of them all. The House could not have held another Member. All the gangways were blocked by eager listeners; the benches were packed until they creaked; Ministers, crowded out of their rightful territory on the Front Bench, were glad to creep into the humbler abodes of the back-bencher.

One seat only remained vacant—that right opposite the Dispatch Box on the Government side of the House.

Questions were dutifully ploughed through, with nobody (not even, on this occasion, the questioners) paying any great attention to the answers.



"EVEN THE RANKS OF TUSCANY..."

"For he's a jolly good fellow!"

Over all hung that curious brand of excited jollity found only in the Commons House of Parliament, which takes the form of facetious questions and comments, mostly of such a technical and domestic nature that visitors in the Galleries are left in a state of puzzlement. Now and then, through windows that, a week ago, would have been open for some unrecordable reason, but which can now be "revealed" to have been flung wide to admit the brilliant sunlight, there came the sound of cheering and snatches of song, and more cheering.

Lightheartedness had its decorous fling on the floor of the House, as when Mr. SOMERSET DE CHAIR complained that the war had been over for twelve minutes (he did not make public his method of computation) and some wish of his constituents in Norfolk had not been fulfilled. "Nor," snapped Mr. RUPERT DE LA BERE, from Evesham, "in the Vale of Evesham!"

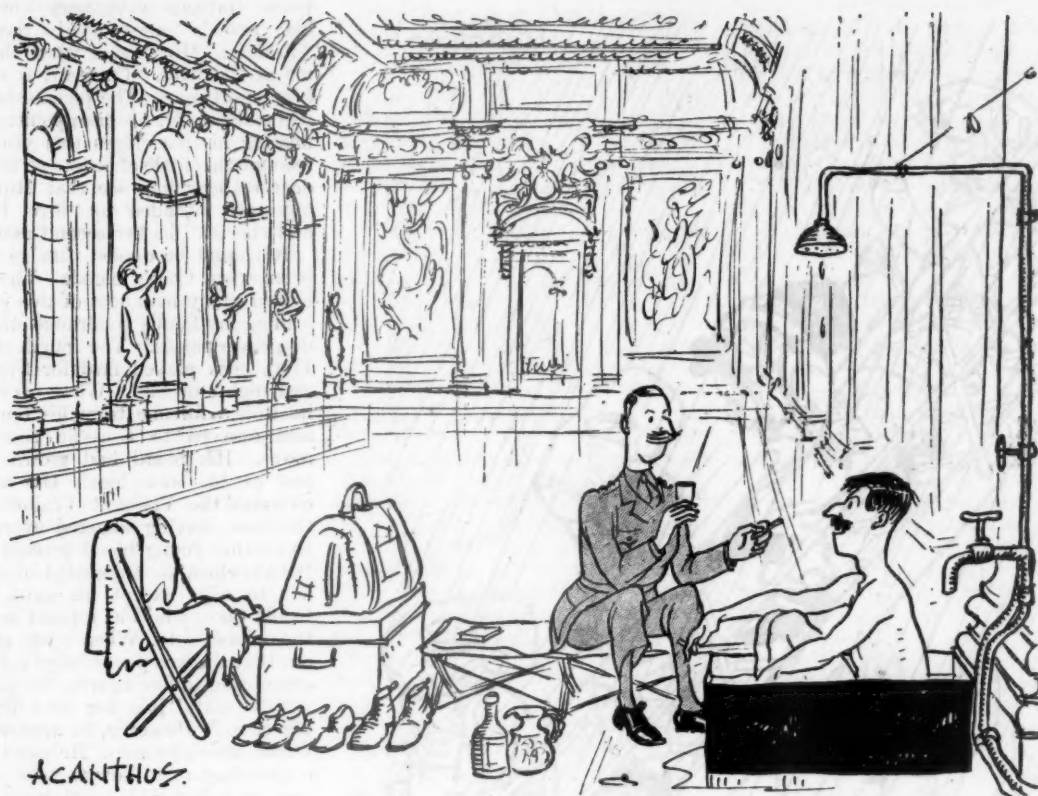
The rest of the House seemed able to bear these injustices with some calm, and then the bores (and others) had an unexpected and (to them at least) altogether delightful windfall. Questions ended, and it was necessary to keep the business going until that vacant seat by the Table should have its expected occupant.

Even Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who jokes "wi' deeficulty," got quite skittish and made several replies that pleased him a good deal and even produced a smile from the easy-to-please House. Lady ASTOR, amid loud cheers, asked a little wistfully that "the barbed wire should be taken down"—but did not say where. Lord WINTERTON wanted the lights turned on on the coast. Mr. "DAVY" KIRKWOOD wanted to know "what we arrrrre waitin' on?" That question was the success of the afternoon.

Nobody told him, for in the middle of a pause of complete silence the door opened and the entire House, floor, galleries and all, turned like a Wimbledon Centre Court crowd to look at the man who walked slowly in. The silence, as they say in the Upper House, was "no longer heard." Members rose, jumped on the benches, waved their Order-papers, opened their lungs and just yelled long and loud like schoolboys greeting the hero of the match. For the new arrival was the Prime Minister, blushing and grinning like any schoolboy-hero, nodding right and left, shaking hands, fumbling for his notes—and then, quite unaffectedly, taking out a crumpled handkerchief and flicking away a tear that began to trickle down his cheek. Abruptly, as though suddenly remembering its dignity, the House got down from the benches and was silent.

Mr. CHURCHILL went slowly to the Table, announced that it had just been his duty to tell the world of the surrender of Germany and the triumph of Allied arms, and read the text of his broadcast address. All Europe—not least "our dear Channel Islands"—had been freed from the yoke of the tyrant. Unconditional surrender had been received from the German High Command.

Pausing irresolutely, Mr. CHURCHILL turned towards the SPEAKER and uttered the words a world in torment had waited more than 2,000 days to hear: "The German war, Mr. Speaker, is therefore at an end!"



ACANTHUS.

"The ceiling's Michelangelo, the decoration's Raphael, and the plumbing's Sapper Jones."

A roar of cheers that rivalled the efforts of the thirty thousand outside came from the throats of the Great Elected. Raising his voice, Mr. CHURCHILL cried with proud challenge: "Advance, Britannia! Long live the cause of Freedom! God Save The King!"

Startled, the House cheered again, to fall silent as Mr. CHURCHILL paid a husky-voiced tribute to its own steadfastness throughout the war and the manner in which it had preserved the title deeds of Democracy while waging relentlessly the most rigorous war.

Then, regaining some of his old formality, he moved that the House adjourn to the Church of St. Margaret (whose rector, Canon ALAN DON, resplendent in purple and crimson, sat by the door) to give thanks for the deliverance of the world from German domination.

The whole House, Members, officials, Pressmen, Official Reporters, messengers, went through the now silent crowds to Parliament's own church,

to take part in as moving a service as even that historic (and sorely bomb-damaged) church has ever witnessed.

The service was part of the Parliamentary proceedings of this memorable day, and duly appeared in Hansard's report. Many an eye was wet in that gathering—wet with tears of pride and joy, at the news, wet with pride and grief as Canon DON read out a startlingly long list of Members of the House who had died on Active Service. The grand words of "The Old Hundredth" rang triumphantly through the church, the service drew to its majestic end, the SPEAKER's procession wound its way through the once more roaring crowd. And (in the words of Hansard's Official Report), "The bells of St. Margaret's Church were rung in celebration of Victory."

Back in the Commons' Chamber Mr. CHURCHILL quietly moved the adjournment. It was the end of a great Day. The longed-for VE Day had passed into Parliamentary history.

Wednesday, May 9th.—Postscript to

VE Day: Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, the Home Secretary, announced amid thunderous cheers that Britain is to be liberated—from some scores of the Defence Regulations that have burdened us. It was a characteristic gesture, made with characteristic promptness.

Thursday, May 10th.—Post-post-script to VE Day: The Commons began the Committee stage of the Bill to give Family Allowances to the parents of the children of the nation, the citizens of the future. It seemed the perfect climax to a week of History, an earnest of happier days to come.

Useful Hobby

"... took us round this vast preserve containing thousands of casks. They are made

— BY —
THE MARQUIS
OF DONEGALL

of American oak and are sent to Scotland for maturing whisky."—*Sunday Dispatch*.



"Monsoon starts very early in these parts."

The Memoirs of Mipsie

By Blanche Addle of Eigg

XIII—A New Interest

AS so often happens in life, the very strength and fervour of Mipsie's sympathy with her new husband over the grave illness of his millionaire uncle, Lord Parsimony, wore her out and made the old man's sudden recovery seem somehow like an anticlimax in which she was incapable of showing or even feeling any joy. In addition, it is well known that Lord Parsimony was a puritan of the deepest dye, who rigidly disapproved of divorce and consequently of his nephew's beautiful wife. In fact Mipsie strongly

suspected him of rallying simply in order to upset her, which would have been base and unkind behaviour indeed. However this may be, she felt sadly depressed and disillusioned on her return to England—a depression which was increased by many bitter letters from Major Hardup, still laid up in Hamfist, in which he accused her of discarding him like an old love. To counteract the effect of these sad episodes she decided on a few months in the South of France, as a mental pick-me-up for her and perhaps a

financial pick-me-up for her husband, whose fortunes were very low after his uncle's unexpected recovery. "Besides," Mipsie said when she told me of the plan, "Constant is such a keen sportsman. The pigeon-shooting will make up for his disappointment at missing his partridges this year." I recount this little anecdote so that my dear readers may see that Mipsie at any rate intended to "love, honour and cherish" in her second marriage.

It cannot be denied that gambling is in every Coot's blood. There are indeed many instances of this passion leading my family to strange and even desperate passes. The fourth earl, in 1730, once played faro for five days and nights on end. When eventually he won a fortune from his opponent and essayed to rise—he could not move. His beard had grown round one of his own legs! On another occasion the Viscount Crainiham of the time, having wagered everything to another young blood (except Coots Balder, which was entailed), had nothing left to offer except his aunt, Lady Emily Coot, who was refused as being too old and ugly. When it was pointed out that she was possessed of a fortune amounting to five figures, the gambler wittily said "It's her own figure I object to." However, he accepted the wager, which he won. He was then in a quandary as to how to take possession of a bed-ridden old lady of 87. Eventually he had her kidnapped (including her bed), and set about investigating her will. He found that Lady Emily, herself an inveterate gambler, had lost the whole of her fortune a few days previously to another octogenarian in a contest of who could turn round in bed the greatest number of times in an hour.

But to return to Mipsie. She and Constant settled down very happily at Monte Carlo, and for a time I hoped that their mutual interest of the tables—not that he was so keen on gambling—would draw them together into the serenity of a happy English family life. I confess that I did not greatly enjoy our only visit to them. Addle missed his pigs sorely, and caused rather an upset at the Casino by asking for the windows to be opened, and I kept on worrying about how the village would get on without me. But it is always an interesting experience to glance into a world outside one's own, and I was able to give a nice little talk on Monte Carlo to my Mothers' Union when I returned—only, fearing that the mention of gambling might have a harmful effect on their quiet lives, I pretended that nothing but halma was played—an

innocent little deception which I hope my recording angel will forgive.

For a long time Mipsie's luck at the tables was amazing and the talk of Monaco. Indeed, visitors seated round the roulette board used to hail my sister's entrance into the *salle* with delight and implore her to come and sit on them so as to bring them fortune. In one year she amassed over 200,000 francs, bought herself a string of pearls and allowed Constant to give her an ermine wrap. Then, suddenly, fickle fortune changed and they had to see most of their gains disappear. Constant's ineptness, his inherent weakness of character now showed itself. Mipsie had done her share—it was obviously his turn to come to their rescue and make money, as she justly pointed out. Instead, he only continued to lose. "You have no backbone, no system in life," Mipsie told him with some bitterness. As a result he spent much time on working out several systems which eventually led them both to disaster, as the following chapter will show.

I must end on a happier note—an amusing story of how Mipsie once acted as a pawnbroker! One day, on the terrace near the Casino, she chanced to see a young girl in tears, while a very handsome young man was endeavouring to comfort her. Mipsie, with her ready sympathy, immediately asked the cause. It was the same old story—they had lost every penny on their honeymoon and could not even pay their hotel bill. "If only I could get back to Austria," the girl wept. "My father never denies me anything. But we haven't even the fare." Mipsie patted her arm. "Don't worry, my child," she said soothingly. "I will pay your fare for you." The girl gasped—"Madame! Will you really trust me?" Mipsie smiled her most roguish smile. "No, my dear," she said, "but my husband will escort you to Austria and back and you shall leave your husband with me as security till you return." Surely the most curious transaction that can ever have taken place in that romantic little principality, but one that indeed testifies to my sister's warm and all-embracing heart. M. D.

"EXPLODER will dispose of Complete first-class Camping Equipment—Edgington tent, furniture, tabloid medicine chest, new surgical instruments, &c., £100; pre-war unworn Dress Suit, with accessories . . ."

Advt. in "Times."

Unworn! Didn't he change in the jungle?

Plenary Session

(From our Special Correspondent)

SAN FRANCISCO, FRIDAY (delayed). In my last dispatch I mentioned the Conference that is being held here. So successful is this proving that it has been decided to retain it for a few more weeks.

The city authorities have certainly done their best to make the place attractive to their polyglot visitors. There are new signs all over the city, adjuring the people to keep the streets tidy, to boil all water, and to start nothing. I saw one of these notices—"Remember, We Have Guests"—stuck to a van belonging to the city dog-pound.

The discovery that delegates from Nougatavia had not yet put in an appearance caused a minor sensation on Wednesday. For a time the wires hummed. Then the missing mission was located in the vicinity of Kicking Horse Pass. Apparently its table of magnetic deviations was pre-war and uncorrected. The assembly decided unanimously to allow Nougatavia to field a substitute—so that the day's session could be described as plenary.

Food still presents one of the greatest problems. Every hotel is full. So are the Chinese and Russian restaurants. Unfortunately, there are no British Restaurants, as such, but most of our representatives are feeding at snack-bars called Delegatessen.

I saw one of Mr. Eden's secretaries to-day. He looked shorter, somehow,

without his hat, but seemed to have more colour than in recent newspaper photographs. Mr. Attlee's landlady—he is staying in a pent-house way over on 35,743rd Street—is warmly appreciative of her guest. "He's not a scrap of trouble," she told me yesterday. "Takes his meals regular and makes not a scrap of dirt."

So far the voting has been thorough rather than spectacular, and very few ballot papers, apart from the proxy votes from Kicking Horse Pass, have been spoiled.

The Big Five have not stolen all the limelight during these last few days. Middle Powers and Smaller Powers as well as the smaller of the Smaller Powers—the so-called "Teeney Weeny" Powers—are busy tabling resolutions and urging vetoes. One unimaginably small Power insists that national frontiers should be shown on all maps by thick black lines instead of dots.

Most of the attention that greeted Mr. Molotov's great speech last week was rapt. The language difficulty, however, is still a barrier to complete understanding.

I append a few of the most notable sayings of a busy week:

"We are not here to compromise anybody." (Suliman Axjlyt.)

"I think the Conference should have been held in Goulascha." (President Ohmslor.)

"There were too many non-starters in the Dumbarton Oaks Handicap." (Olaf Umid.)

"I always think that alternative solutions are best." (Douglas Broad-ribs.)

Hop.



At the Play

"LETTERS TO A LADY" (EMBASSY)
 "DESERT RATS" (ADELPHI)

HERE are two plays of the war, one as mild as the other is turbulent; the first confined to a room in a Bayswater flat, the second ranging across the African sands; one contemplative by the fire, the other on duty in the firing-line. The letters were written by a "lonely soldier," *Thomas Lennie*, Northcountry parachutist, to *Crystal Renison*, a young widow living with her mother somewhere near Lancaster Gate. Mr. JAMES PARISH now gently reports the emotions, the confidences, the hesitations of the pair's first meeting during Christmas 1943. As epilogue, eight months on, there is news of the soldier's death. The second piece, Captain COLIN MORRIS's *Desert Rats*, is unremittingly arduous—the grim tale of a reconnaissance towards Tripoli at the heart of the African campaign, with a personal quarrel for further high explosive.

These plays have the same virtue—a clear sincerity of purpose—and the same flaw, a manner that becomes stilted when the authors cease to write naturally and begin to compose. (Mr. PARISH might recast the fireside chat between *Crystal* and her soldier: it becomes acutely polysyllabic). But, assuming always that you are in a properly receptive mood, both pieces will fix attention. While much of the Embassy evening is a rest in cushioned ease, the Adelphi's "play of adventure" will stretch you without mercy upon the flinty and steel couch of war.

My sharpest memories of *Letters to a Lady* are of passages off the main track. First is that quite irrelevant spasm in which the Army takes offensive action in Bayswater. *Harry McTavish*, soldier from Edinburgh (and proud of it), is a grand fellow to have at a party. It warms the spirit when he joins a brither Scot in hustling from *Crystal's* flat an egregious water-fly—the waspish wisp of a young man whose malice domestic has blotted Christmas night. Second, and more

serious, there is an air-raid, complete with the oddly archaic wail of a siren—a sound as dated as the music of sackbut and psaltery. We are growing used to raids in the theatre, but this one is uncommon, no less than the stage's first flying-bomb. It drills through the air with a horrid clamorous realism; its explosion seems enough to shake the sure and firm-set earth of N.W.3. Wise collectors will keep their copies of the Embassy programme. "Flying effects by . . ." is a normal



TO AVOID ENCOURAGING FALSE HOPES IN
 THE SOLDIER

Thomas Lennie MR. EMRYS JONES
Crystal Renison MISS HELEN SHINGLER
Roger Bryning MR. DONALD STRACHAN

enough acknowledgment. (See *Peter Pan* or any pantomime). "Flying-bomb effects . . ." is a prize.

For the rest, Mr. PARISH has written a plain tale, sentimental and disarming. Most of its people are sound types: the correspondents, adoring and adored each enriched by the encounter; *Crystal's* loyal stand-by, a naval commander (Mr. DONALD STRACHAN) whom she will marry after curtain-fall; her very mothering mother, her Yorkshire maid, her Scottish soldier-guests. Mr. PARISH would not claim to be profound; his play never delves into character but loiters amiably on the surface. Mr. EMRYS JONES, who has a charming integrity, and Miss HELEN

SHINGLER are lonely soldier and less lonely widow; Miss LOUISE HAMPTON tosses off the maternal comedy; and Mr. CAVEN WATSON, the chucker-out, is as solid a Scot as Miss HELEN FRANKLYN (the future *Mrs. McTavish*) is undeniably oop fra' Leeds. There was some under-speaking on the first night. Mr. JOHN FERNALD, whose direction is valuable, will have corrected this by now.

We find little of the soft phrase of peace, certainly neither loitering nor Crystal-gazing, in the wholly masculine adventure of *Desert Rats*. None will underrate the vigour of Captain MORRIS's play, though its dialogue could well be more supple. (There the ill-started *Happy Few* had an advantage.) A quiet West-countryman, *Trooper Bates*, given a ripe-apple accent by Mr. BILL ROWBOTHAM, is better drawn than either of the contrasted officers—one of them, *David Scott* (Mr. RICHARD GREENE), an incarnation of daring and independence, and the other, *Anthony Palmer* (Mr. MANNING WHILEY), a soldier more orthodox in style. The parts are acted with much drive and spoken in eager barks. Mr. GREENE, if vocally a little monotonous, finds the right simplicity for the desert burial of *Bates* and the right quality of bitterness for the rivals' last verbal rough - and - tumble in the *Rats'* hiding - place, the "tomb of a holy man" just outside Tripoli. The adventure ends with a strong theatrical stroke—

bagpipes' sudden skirling as Scottish troops enter the town to that joyful music heard over eighty years before at the relief of beleaguered Lucknow. This is a first-rate curtain. Other things to applaud are the peaty voice of Mr. KIERON O'HANRAHAN (who, with that name and brogue, is an inevitable choice for a *Trooper O'Neil*), and the three settings of Mr. LAURENCE IRVING. Altogether it is a tough, honest affair, marching sturdily along a now familiar desert highway. While the African campaign and its *Rats* are honoured a stage desert can no longer breed the romantic melodramas and spectacular "musicals" of its past.

J. C. T.

The Photograph

"MY Aunt Esther," said Captain Simpson rather moodily, "wants me to send her a photograph of myself. She says that unless I send her one she will be afraid that I am going black."

"Black?"

"Yes. You may have observed that our Kugombas, although they have hearts as white as driven snow, are inclined to be a little dark-complexioned. It would perhaps not be an exaggeration to describe them as distinctly non-Aryan types. My Aunt Esther has always held the theory that a man is apt to become like his surroundings; for instance, when I was a small boy I remember she embarrassed me very much in a fish-shop by suddenly saying in a loud triumphant voice 'This fishmonger becomes every day more and more like a hake.' She held, too, that our greengrocer resembled a vegetable marrow."

"It is a plausible theory," I said, "but in your own case I think you can safely send your aunt a photograph. You are very little blacker than when you came out."

"I don't like having my photograph taken," said Simpson. "The camera never does me justice. But my aunt was good to me when I was a child, and will possibly offer me accommodation if I cannot secure a Portal when I go home, so I suppose I must oblige her."

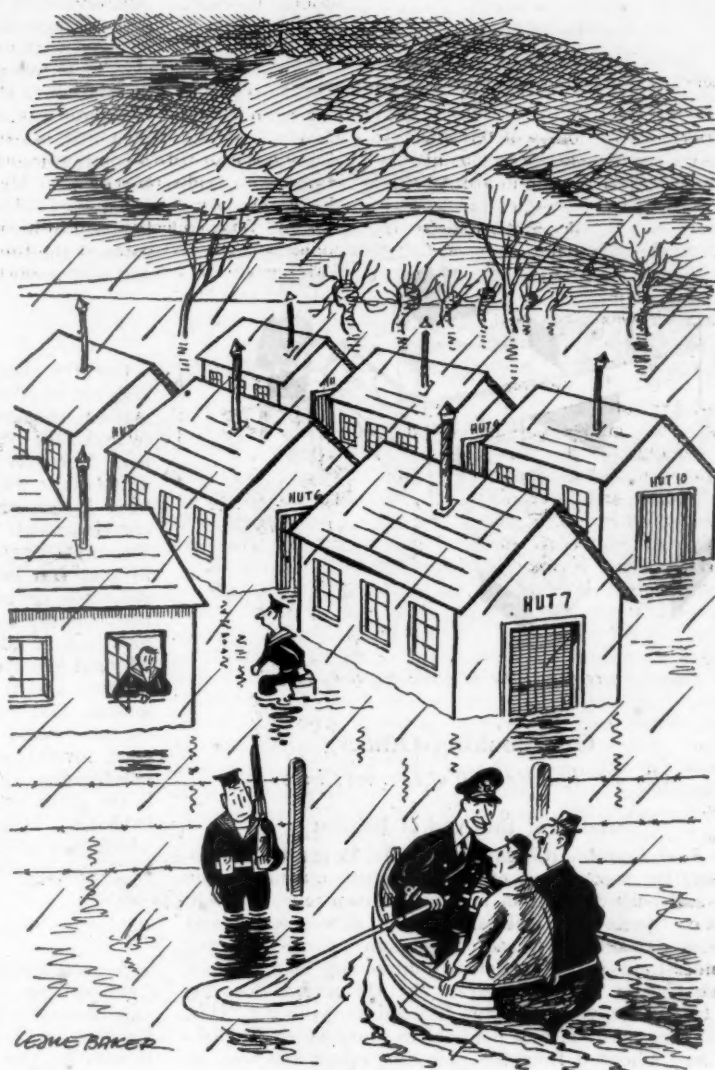
So he posed for an Egyptian street-photographer who charged one shilling and delivered the photograph in five minutes, as they used to do at the seaside at home, though in those days it was only threepence.

We examined the print critically, but owing to some queer trick of the light Simpson's face looked very dark, and I told him that if he sent it to his aunt it would probably only confirm her worst forebodings.

"Nonsense," said Simpson, "it is just your imagination. The human face always looks a little bit darker in a photograph than in real life. I will get Kabongo to have his photograph taken, and you will see the difference."

So we persuaded our driver Kabongo to have a shilling-worth at our expense. After the camera had clicked Kabongo went off in the truck to get some petrol, while Simpson and I waited for the photograph.

"I'll scribble a note to my aunt here and now," said Simpson, "and send my photograph off to her by air mail."



"This is H.M.S. Sphinx, one of our shore establishments."

So he wrote the note and stuffed it into his pocket, and by that time Kabongo's photograph was finished.

"It's not bad," said Simpson, "I think he'll be pleased with it. When you compare it with mine," he added, holding them side by side, "you will see that mine does not look dark at all. It has even a rather anæmic look."

Naturally he forgot to post the letter to his aunt until just before Kabongo called for us in the evening, and had to rush to catch the post. Then when Kabongo came he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the second photograph to give to him.

"But this is yours, effendi," said Kabongo. "Where is mine?"

The answer was only too plain, and until Simpson's aunt gets his second letter, which with the usual perverseness of posts will probably not be until at least a week after she gets his first one, she will feel that her theories about people taking on the colour of their surroundings are decisively confirmed.

o o

"The Germans had taken up over 1,000 millimetres of track, leaving a single track." *Daily paper.*

And a toy signal?



"Dear sir—re your letter of 3rd September, 1939 . . ."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Sunset of the Age of Reason

IN *Four Portraits* (COLLINS, 12/6) Mr. PETER QUENNEL pictures the second half of the eighteenth century in the lives and achievements of four well-known men, Boswell, Gibbon, Sterne and Wilkes. Wilkes, a resourceful and amusing demagogue, whose contemporary fame it is easy to understand, is not particularly interesting at a distance of nearly two hundred years. Mr. QUENNEL does his best for Wilkes, whom he puts forward as typifying "that passion for personal and political freedom which Englishmen had inherited from the preceding epoch and were to carry on triumphantly throughout the next"; but he does not convince us that Wilkes's fight for the liberties of the subject would have been waged had he not himself been the subject whose liberties were being threatened. Every age has its Wilkes, but Boswell, Gibbon and Sterne are originals whose interest is still very far from being exhausted. In his delightful and perceptive sketch of Boswell, Mr. QUENNEL picks out a sentence from one of his youthful letters—"When I get into the Guards and am in real life"—as the clue to his character and career. Boswell, he comments, was the type of man who is always in search of "real life" because he is always in search of himself—"In movement he existed; but left alone, he was visited by a dreadful negation of feeling that reduced him to despair. He was no one. There was no real life." Gibbon, Mr. QUENNEL treats as the antithesis to Boswell—"Boswell's form of self-love was often destructive, it was part of Gibbon's genius to be usually his own best friend." Later, however, Mr. QUENNEL presents Gibbon in a less self-centred light. The last journey of his life, when he left Lausanne for London in 1793, was, Mr. QUENNEL says,

"an errand of friendship." Lady Sheffield had just died, and, though half Europe was plunged in war, Gibbon resolved that duty "obliged him to rush to the widower's side." It was probably at least as much out of friendship for himself as for Lord Sheffield that Gibbon hurried home. Lausanne was not divided from the French Revolutionaries by a strip of sea, and Gibbon's dread and detestation of the revolution was so strong as very possibly to have hastened his death. Mr. QUENNEL passes too lightly over the collapse of Gibbon's ivory tower; and in a similar spirit of leniency in his otherwise subtle and vivid sketch of Sterne, perhaps the best of the four essays, he assigns disinterested and tender emotion to Sterne's experiments in sensibility.

H. K.

Homely Cures

Country children have always got a certain amount of kick out of *Herbal Remedies* (FABER, 8/6) and other home-made medicaments; and even evacuees have been known to make the best of a cough with an eye to black-currant tea. Moreover the ritual rhyme which goes with rubbing a little nose with a little mutton fat is warranted to transform a somewhat oleaginous onslaught into first-class entertainment. One is not saying that all Mrs. MARY THORNE QUELCH's recipes—adapted as they are to every ill that can be dealt with by the home pharmacy—are palatable or amusing; but they are far more so than the chemist's, and cheaper. A gargle of wild thyme, on the first sign of adenoids, may not reduce the swelling—but why not give it a chance? With herbs, treatment is largely dieting; and it is easy to see how you react to walnuts, onions, and so forth, without postponing a necessary doctor. Some excellent first-aid instructions and some good invalid-cookery recipes complete this sensible and enterprising little book. The only maltreated vegetable is the globe artichoke, which is said to be like "a little cabbage." Actually it is a thistle, and picked very young—which is wasteful—is best fried. It should never, never be "covered with white sauce."

H. P. E.

Square Peg

A good many people, unhappily, especially those over "call-up" age, could no doubt find a parallel in their own experience for the mental processes recorded by Mr. ROM LANDAU in *The Wing* (FABER, 16/-). Unable to reconcile it with his conscience to continue the normal business of life at a time when the whole of civilization was in peril, Mr. LANDAU abandoned the pursuit of literature to take up an appointment as liaison officer with the newly-formed Polish Air Force in Britain. Later, he volunteered as an air gunner; but, after overcoming the handicaps of age and of eyesight and obtaining the coveted wing, he found himself, as a result of the remarkable gift of certain types of official mind for pushing square pegs into round holes (to the detriment, incidentally, of hole no less than of peg), functioning as a switchboard operator in an underground Ops. room. The measure of his disillusionment, as anyone who has passed through a similar experience will readily comprehend, was that of the white-hot enthusiasm with which he had originally entered the R.A.F., and the result was a final breaking of the link binding him to the service which had gained, and still held, his unstinted admiration and affection. It must not be thought, however, that this is merely that somewhat boring thing, the story of a grievance. Mr. LANDAU has a great deal of interesting light to throw upon life in the Air Force, upon the great spirit of comradeship prevailing in the Bomber Squadrons,

upon the courage, the unspoken patriotism and the steadfast endurance of pilots, gunners and ground staff, as well as upon the early days of the Polish contribution to Allied victory in the air. Finally, those who have shared the feelings of frustration and anti-climax which Mr. LANDAU so poignantly records may find comfort from his courageous resolve to find in his apparent failure guidance and hope for the future.

C. F. S.

A Master of Fantasy

Hans Andersen tells of a needy little cripple who was given a fairy-book. "He won't get fat on that!" cried the enraged parents; but actually the gift aroused a spirit which finally triumphed over the inert body. *The Little Prince* (HEINEMANN, 9/6) is precisely that kind of book; and one can foresee M. ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY's limpid and profound fairy-tale—rendered by KATHERINE WOODS into reasonably mellifluous American—taking a dynamic place in a young life and gratefully girdling the spiritual bastions of the old. Here is an airman, stranded in mid-Sahara; and here, beside him, is a small child who has a little asteroid of his own and who has visited other earthy and complacent asteroids on his way to this planet. *The Little Prince* is communicative, but he never answers questions. He asks them: and a fox teaches him the joy of true acquisition, a snake the necessity of self-abnegation. He is the heart of poetry and this is a poet's book. Whether it is for children or grown-up people, let lovers of "The Little Mermaid" and "The Snow Queen" decide. It is in their genre; but it is more subtle, more lovely, more truthful—and even more treasurable.

H. P. E.

Levelling Parnassus

At fairly frequent intervals nowadays someone, shyly and with extreme circumspection, addresses himself to the perhaps hopeless task of trying to coax the public into a taste for poetry. *Crown to Mend* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 7/6) is the title Mr. C. L. BOLTZ has chosen for his attempt, which he opens with a chapter called "Foreword to Jack and Jill." Jack and Jill are apparently intended to typify the average young man and girl, whom the author represents himself as winning over to a love and understanding of poetry. Jill is sensitive to the way things are said, and a couple of quotations from Keats, reinforced by the information that "at least one eminent poet of to-day looks like a normal business man," convert her to poetry. Jack is more resistant, but yields to a variety of arguments ranging from a reference to Whitman's powerful constitution and the great vitality and physical endurance of Wordsworth and Meredith to the high opinion of poets held by Einstein and Lord Haldane. Having thus attuned Jack and Jill to his message, Mr. BOLTZ escorts them through English poetry, from Shakespeare, who "would have delighted in Tommy Handley," and Milton, who "hated the long-faced and short-haired, dreary, sadistic, oppressing Presbyterians" down to Auden and Spender, both of whom, Mr. BOLTZ says, are "very much concerned with politics" and "did not retreat to the bosom of the Church." Having brought the poets down to Jack and Jill's level, Mr. BOLTZ concludes his book with the reasonable hope that Jack and Jill will like it.

H. K.

The House that Liked to be Visited

Mr. R. C. HUTCHINSON's novel, *Interim* (CASSELL, 7/6), which appears after a pause of five years, has a rare and curious air. The author begins abruptly—"Not that Orchilly was unique . . . Neither should I pretend that

Quindle was peculiar . . . Because I found at Orchilly something more whole than mere sensation I shall put a glimpse of it on paper." That glimpse will reveal to some bewildered readers a house inhabited by an erratic, Quixotic and (alas!) whimsical doctor who has lived in China and feels he should be back there, his invalid wife, and some refugees who suffer from the bestowed name of "Kiss-Chick." It is also the rendezvous of the son and daughter of the house and soldiers from the district who are drawn, as by a magnet, to do household chores, cart manure and join in big and small talk. To others it may open magic casements through which a light that never was will stream, transporting the mundane to highest romance, so that they will not be irritated even by the visitor who stared at his stomach "with a faint smile, amused and faintly incredulous, like those who look at pelicans," or by the author's being "astigmatic to human foible."

B. E. B.

An Eye-Witness in Algiers

Mme. RENÉE PIERRE-GOSSET, a Parisian journalist, had the fortune to be in Algiers during the Allied landing of November 8th 1942. *Algiers 1941-1943* (CAPE, 10/6) is the very interesting result. Clearly it was a very tricky business, so confused was the situation, so unreliable some of the chief actors in the drama. There was Darlan, for example, who "possessed all the bad qualities of Talleyrand" and vacillated from side to side, but managed to emerge as High Commissioner "by virtue of the powers conferred on him" by Marshal Pétain (who had declared him traitor). Then there was trouble with Giraud, who was to have led the insurrection, but was still in Gibraltar, where he had the shock of hearing the famous speech purporting to be his declaimed on the Algiers radio by Dr. Aboulker. It was a tragi-comedy of errors. But a small band of unarmed young Frenchmen—a handful of musical-comedy conspirators—had taken command of the town and held it for some eight hours, saving the situation. Mme. PIERRE-GOSSET gives us a host of amusing anecdotes, and character-sketches of many famous men.

L. W.



"Since this news began the war has cost the taxpayer no less than £140,000—and now perhaps you'd like to bear the headlines again."



"... and before the war it was a wonderful sight to see the fleets of vans sweeping out of here bound for all parts of the great metropolis."

Toller Applies

To The Sure-Fire School of Journalism

SIRS,—With reference to your remarks on my story *Hearts Aflame*, it happens that I have myself lost taste for this type of literature on the discovery in my kit-bag of a work by Richard Jefferies which has rekindled a desire to become a nature writer, an idea also encouraged by the season of spring and the pushing buds and foliage and singing birds of Germany with which it is impossible not to fraternize.

I have already been able to amass several interesting facts on the subject of nature, notably while lying face down over a river pool during a recent

pause in mopping up the Fatherland; I however myself unfortunately being under observation by Lt. Stookley and other Troop members who consider themselves too tough for loving nature, although only yesterday Sgt. Pinhoe's vehicle broadcast an inter-com argument on the suspected presence of skylarks and their similarity to authentic ones found over the South Downs—so that I was subsequently presented with a large gilt mirror borrowed from a castle, to the prejudice of good order and Troop discipline.

I nevertheless in this way was able to observe the habits of some unusual flies and larger spiders which have

seemingly learned to walk on water without getting their feet wet and which perhaps have so far escaped proper appreciation from nature writers. It is difficult to say for certain what these little creatures do all day beyond running along, as it were, on top of the current in order to keep their place in the pool and occasionally making little dashes to the bank and back, but I was able to record a remarkable phenomenon in their shadow thrown by the sun on the shallow bed of the river. Here each foot appeared equipped with a boxing glove, and the body scarcely shown, so they operated like animated musical

notations; sharing this shadow world with drifting specks of light which would suddenly vanish from the river bottom and which prolonged study proved to be reflections from bubbles.

From being normally unobservant, so that on one occasion in a crowd I carried on a considerable conversation on the subject of love with a lady whom I mistook for my sister—although admittedly my eye since then has been to some extent enlivened by reconnaissance duties against the enemy—I am training myself to find wonder in the simplest surroundings of nature such as the sinking of the sun as I saw it on leave over the Yorkshire moors, noting how the naturalist actually can follow the rate of descent as measured by the nearing curve of moor until the sun rests for a moment poised, is a quarter gone, half gone, and finally goes altogether, trailing scarves of purple and gold and faint sea-green.

This concentrated method of regarding the world unfortunately lays the naturalist open to rude shocks at the insensitivity of others, an example being the arrival of a golf ball during the above musings, since it happened I was standing on the 13th green of our moorland golf-course, and the appearance of a golfer to whom I endeavoured to point out a veil of particularly delicate pink but who instead took me for an expert player and requested my advice on his swing so that I was tempted to give it until he had lost four balls into the wood and left me again to the solitude of the evening; fortunately in time to allow study of a rabbit which appeared from the fringe of the bushes, nibbled some grass, seemed to recollect something, and returned into the wood.

The problem of what birds and animals think led me to take a number of notes with a preliminary view to an essay "Behind the Beak" or "Between Those Long Ears." In the same wood, where on leave I often went to enjoy the sharp sunlight and the smell of new growth mixed with the musty fragrance of last summer stirred with the warmth of spring (I would take the liberty of copyrighting this phrase from the temptation of use by members of your Nature Dept.) I would frequently observe the habits of pigeons who would wheel into the tree tops, sit for some time looking this way and that, and then fly off elsewhere for no apparent reason. Equally inexplicable was the thought-process of an old crow whom I found every evening in the same tree from which he would fly always down the same woodland ride in a mournful manner. Perhaps he

had been jilted or lost his love. But, as I now understand, it is sufficient in nature writing simply to record such incidents, which is the advantage attracting me from the troublesome contrivance of circumstance, character and plot made so clear in your rules for modern fiction; and, with a change of title, the same material will doubtless furnish an essay on "Forest Feathers" or "A Wood in Spring."

With reference to the isolated life of the naturalist, although at the moment isolation for more than brief spells from other members of the Second Army is not compatible with one's duty still required in conquered Germany, I am prepared as soon as conditions allow to forgo the company of the common insensitive herd of mankind and to concentrate completely on nature, having as example a period in the life of my Uncle Lionel who developed a praiseworthy passion for butterflies which he pursued through the summer months with a net originally intended for shrimps, being only brought back from this pure existence by the hurt inflicted by a suggestion of my aunt that his real object was to impress with the shape of his knees a widow by the name of Mrs. Spenchurch who lived in a cottage past which it so happened butterflies persisted in leading my uncle, this being explained by the profusion of blooms in Mrs. Spenchurch's hedge; the episode culminating in my uncle chasing a Cabbage

White through the french windows and so by accident securing an introduction, upon which my aunt made the innuendo mentioned and threatened divorce unless my uncle abandoned butterflies.

I also understand it is frequently of advantage to enclose with nature articles suitable photographs, and I have in fact, during a previous period of ambition as a naturalist, had experience with a camera in the field; on one occasion getting within six yards of a rabbit when unfortunately I lost the picture through the incomplete training of my dog Firebrand whom I had ordered to remain under cover but whose enthusiasm led him, despite signs and whispered injunctions, to squirm in my wake, finally coming up behind and licking my ear so that the camera swung slightly and instead took a picture of a clump of trees; this, however, by good fortune gaining a prize in a competition for nature photographs, being described as showing great discrimination and feeling for shadow.

You will thus gather that I will not be starting from scratch in the world of nature. I would be obliged for your terms for an advanced course in this type of writing and your estimate of the chances in the post-war literary market for a second Jefferies or W. H. Hudson.

Yours faithfully,
J. TOLLER, Lt.

B.L.A.



"It's almost nine if you want to hear the six o'clock news again."

Out West

MY friend Jorkens has never borrowed a sum of money from me in his life, any more than he has actually ever asked me to stand him a drink, though it has often been a pleasure for me to do so. When he is out of cash he prefers to acquire it honestly in various ways, often by making small bets. The only time I ever did lend him a small amount I had practically to force it on him, and he repaid it within the hour; surely almost a record for a repayment. It was at Victoria Station one day, and we were taking the same train into Kent. I was going to Shoreham; I don't know where he was going to. And he only had sixpence on him at the time, which was obviously inadequate. I met him by chance on the platform and he told me how things were, and it was quite a long time before he would accept the loan of a few shillings. Well, in the end he did, and he bought his ticket and we went down into Kent in the same carriage. There were some American soldiers in the carriage with us, and Jorkens sat silent until after we passed Bromley. I fancy that he was thinking. But, when we had gone about twelve miles, he brisled up, and asked one of the American soldiers when he had left home. The soldier looked very thoughtful, and I thought he was going to answer, but he remained thinking for so long that Jorkens turned to another and asked him the same question, and he did not get any more information out of him.

"I see how it is," said Jorkens after a while. "You can't pass on information like that. And yet I pick up a certain amount of information myself as I go along. I don't say it's absolutely accurate always, but good enough to bet on."

At the word "bet" I fancied that the American soldiers pricked up their ears a bit. And Jorkens went on: "I can't tell what ports you came from; only a spy could know that; but I think I can deduce when you left the western hemisphere."

"Say!" said one of them. "That's pretty good."

"Not to the very minute," said Jorkens, "but within half an hour."

They looked a bit incredulous at

that, but Jorkens brought back the attention of all of them with his next few words, like a shepherd rounding up sheep.

"And I'll bet on it," he added.

"Why!" said one of them. "You'll bet on it?"

"Oh, yes," said Jorkens. "Within half an hour I'll tell all of you when you left the western hemisphere. And I'll have a little bet with anybody who cares to have one."

Somehow, or other they reminded me of fish coming up to a handful of grain. They all leaned forward and looked at Jorkens.

"And when did I leave it, Mister?" asked one of them very politely.

But Jorkens arranged the bets first, quite small sums in silver, and they all had plenty of that on them. And then he wrote down the bet. Bromley was far behind us and we began to see orchards before he had everything settled. And then he looked at each man, and one of them asked him the same question that he asked before. "What time did I leave it, Mister?"

"Well," said Jorkens, "you all left it at the same time."

"And when was that, Mister?" asked another of them.

Of course I saw the object of the bet; it was made out of consideration



Visitor from the Backwoods. "What a pity all these beautiful decorations have got to come down again!"

for me, in order to repay the few shillings that I had lent Jorkens; but I did not see much chance of getting my money back. I should have liked to have stopped him, but it was too late now and the Americans would never have let me. So it had to go on, and I must say I was puzzled.

"Five minutes ago," said Jorkens.

"Five minutes!" they gasped.

"Yes, roughly," Jorkens said.

Well, there was a good deal of talk after that, which there is no particular method of printing, so far as I know, because they all spoke at once. Till at last one of the soldiers drew a map out of his pocket and shouted, "By Heck! He's right."

And, whoever Heck was, he paid, there and then. And all the others paid immediately after.

It seems that practically the whole of Kent is in the eastern hemisphere, while Surrey is in the western. I saw at once, as I watched Jorkens collecting their shillings, that this was no way to treat allies that had come so far to help us, and I began to explain to one of them that the bet must have been made in error and must be washed out. But he cut me short at once.

"Not on your life," he said. "That's a perfectly good bet. It's cost me only a dollar, and it will be worth a hundred dollars to me. Why! There's not more than a hundred million people in the world that know a thing like that. And look how many that leaves that don't. I'll be looking for some of them from now on, and I'll sure have some bets with them."

So, as that was the view they all took, I could only leave it at that.

ANON.

To a Friesian Cow

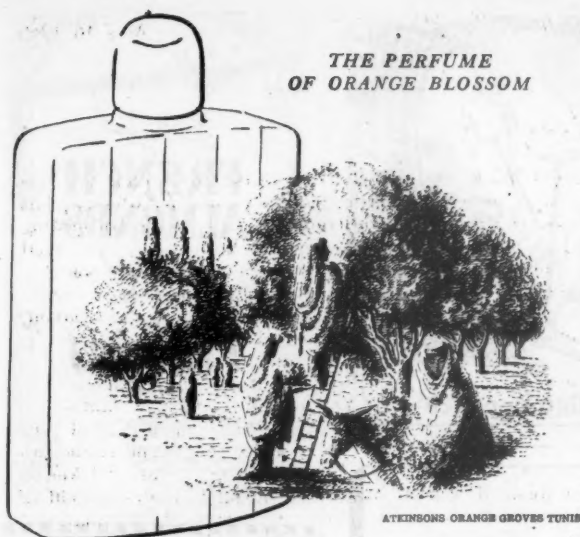
GEH Kuh! Überfreundlich Beast!
Bitte withdrawn Sie ein Schritt
or two.

Du bist ein Bore zu sag the very least,
Du laut gebreather, tail beswitcher du!
Seh! Das Feld is voll von Buttertassen,
Unter den Linden es gibt kühle Shade;
Habe die Gütigkeit zu uns gelassen
Mit unser sandwiches und limonade.

V. G.

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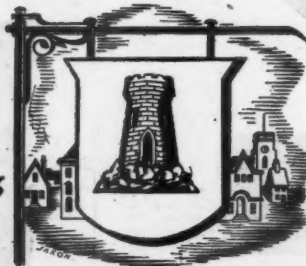
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